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The Commonweal

May 27, 1949

Report from Chile

Vincent J. Hope

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The Catholic Novelist

Bruce Marshall

VOLUME L

15c

NUMBER 7

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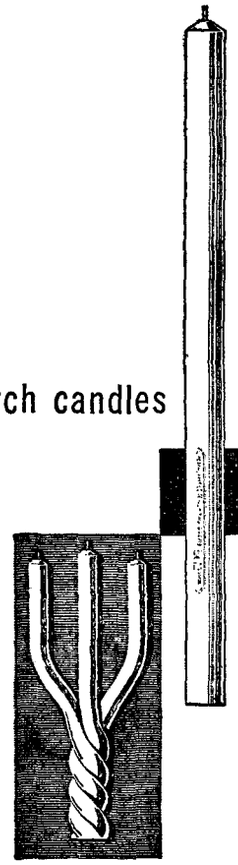

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The
COMMONWEAL

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and The Guide to Catholic Literature Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924 with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*
Published weekly and copyrighted 1949 in the U.S.A., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter February 9, 1934, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1875. U. S. and Canada $7 a year. Foreign $8. Single copies 15c

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DP Okies and Sharecroppers?

THE main purpose of our legislation permitting entry of European Displaced Persons is three-fold: to parallel the Marshall Plan and speed European recovery by cutting down the number of people the economy of that continent must support, to bring to the United States new talents and skills which will add to our own national wealth and well-being; to give the DP's, who cannot return to their homes in Central and Eastern Europe because of their opposition to totalitarianism, a fair chance of a new start in life.

On the first score things have been moving very slowly. According to the legislation now on the books 205,000 Displaced Persons are to come to our shores in the two-year period ending 1950. But toward the end of the first year only 21,425 DP's had actually reached here. Public sentiment for revising and extending this legislation has been considerable. The House Judiciary Committee has just amended and reported out the Celler Bill, which would increase the number to 339,000 over a period of three years. The McGrath-Neely Bill, which would increase the figure to 400,000 and 4 years—among other things—has yet to be acted on in the Senate. Only if the United States assumes responsibility for numbers such as these will we reach the first objective.

Mr. Ugo Carusi, Chairman of the Displaced Persons Commission, gives an enthusiastic answer to queries about the second objective. The first year's settlers brought over the widest range of skills and productive talents: these contingents included doctors, farmers, stone-cutters, weavers, saddlemakers and domestics. Moreover, all these new Americans have compiled such good records that "we haven't had to send a single one home," Mr. Carusi stated.

On the third count there is cause for increasing concern. Reports are coming in from the South which are disquieting. Rev. Joseph B. Koncius, president of the United Lithuanian Relief Fund in America, recently visited a priest in Alabama who was so exercised about the situation that "he would almost rather see these people die in their camps in Europe than to have them come to America as sharecroppers." On the other hand officials say that some of the stories of DP exploitation in the South have been exaggerated. When Father Koncius interviewed in their own language several Latvians and Lithuanians who have just landed at New Orleans to work as sharecroppers, however, he could find no one who had even been told in advance what he would be paid. Negro families which worked for one of the larger cotton growers who is taking on these DP's averaged about $890 family income last year.

There is another disturbing report, this time from impatient Southern California citrus growers. Their protest about delays in the arrival of the 700 DP's they are sponsoring points to a strange anomaly. The prospective employers comprise three groups in the immediate vicinity of Los Angeles. At the present moment there are 65,000 unemployed farm workers in all of California—many of them in the San Joaquin Valley, only a hundred miles north of Los Angeles. Citrus growers in these three areas in Southern California have offered every blandishment (except high wages and year-'round employment) to attract these workers for their May-October harvesting and packing season. Between two and three thousand did respond but left, on the average, after 2½ days. Efforts to recruit Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans and Indians for the work have been inadequate; during the war it was carried on by Jamaicans and war prisoners.

That such jobs as these—in the South and West—are in store for hundreds of Displaced Persons who have placed all their hopes in the United States is a sorry prospect. It is hard to conceive of a more unfitting reward for years of determined opposition to totalitarianism. To enable them again to become self-supporting, the

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Displaced Persons we welcome to our shores are clearly entitled to something better than jobs which nobody else will take.

Building and Financing the Future

IT TAKES a long time to grow a tree, and the man who plants it can never know absolutely who will want the tree when it grows to tall timber, and for what purpose, and how much he will pay. It is futile to argue and act on the basis of impossible prophecy. In dealing with natural resources, we have to consider the past, and also the natural condition of the earth in a somewhat speculative and ideal condition: how the earth would look with the perverse damage by man withheld from the landscape—as the land would be afresh, ready to serve a new generation in a climax of natural richness and beauty.

In America, the picture of a New World is so close, and the spectacle of destructive exploitation so immediate, that we have the most persuasive reasons in the world to act for the physical redemption of the continent. No one here speaks against conservation, but we speak for it in too many and conflicting ways. And far too many Americans, living in the strange, synthetic blocks of our cities and suburbs, fail to think and speak at all about the conservation of the natural resources, whose extravagant abundance is necessary for their own peculiar ways of life.

Those people who are interested constantly try to develop action, in the face of disagreement and indifference. Once again, for instance, this month Congress has a bill: Senator Clinton Anderson of New Mexico has introduced a Forestry measure which would assure regulation of tree cuttings and other forest practices. First newspaper accounts of the proposed law indicate that it follows the recommendations of Lyle Watts, chief of the Forest Service. The law would insure that the cutting of trees on private as well as public land, on small acreages and large (on lots from 40 acres) be kept to proper conservation standards—either through the laws and enforcement of the States, or, after three years, of the Federal Government. The facts of America's forest lands and wood lots, past and present, and the competence of the Forest Service, ought to place the burden of proof upon opponents of the bill and on those dangerous persons who still want to do nothing now. Unfortunately, in all probability the issue will be decided in the negative by the crowded calendar of Congress and the meagre interest of the public—matters irrelevant to the genuine problem.

A National Emergency Conference on Resources was just held in Washington by persons who take seriously the condition of our crust of earth. We will report the conference in an article soon, but will note here the most dramatic proposal put forward at the meeting. Stephen Raushenbush suggested the creation by the Federal Government of a lending agency, a Natural Resources Corporation, authorized to lend $13 billion in ten years for conservation projects judged capable of paying off in dollars, with the required interest. It would seem rather impossible to inaugurate, check, and grant loans on 13 billion dollars' worth of sound conservation projects in ten years, but the proposal stresses a fact that ought to drive home. Sound land use and resource conservation is a paying business proposition, aside from wider economic considerations and all the other considerations of civilization and the good life.

The National Lumber Manufacturers Association is a compelling witness. They oppose the Forest Service campaign for regulation of tree cutting (while advocating with doubtful consistency tax-supported intensification of fire, disease and insect control, and replanting on denuded lands), and one of their arguments is that, "For the first time, it is possible to appeal to the profit motive. Landowners can now be told truthfully that growing and harvesting crops of trees is a profitable business. . . ." The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and member banks in that district have been working since the end of the war to develop small "conservation loans" for farmers and woodlot owners. Cool bankers have found that within ten years a sensible job of land use and conservation can improve the capital value and earnings of a farm so that the pay-off is the kind of thing that farmers, and bankers too, find thoroughly attractive. Arguments against action are difficult to find; inaction continues from blind inertia alone.

Peter Maurin

WITH the death of its co-founder, *The Catholic Worker* has lost a beloved leader, and the Church in this country one of its most colorful figures. Peter was a sturdy French peasant who founded the CW movement with Dorothy Day after nearly a quarter-century of knocking about this whole continent. At Brownsville, Pa., his lodging was a coke oven which he shared with a Negro; in Chicago, he slept in the basement of an apartment building where he worked as a janitor's helper. For short stretches he dug sewers in Alberta, heaved rocks in Ottawa, lumber-jacked in the Adirondacks, taught French in New York and Chicago, and hopped freights to St. Louis and other cities where there were jobs. All the while he was reading, observing, pondering.

As an "agitator" for the *Worker* and tradition-honored Christian social ideas after 1933, he was persistent, witty, patient, unabashed by "big shots," and difficult to exchange ideas with

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straight off. He liked to make his points in the form of rhythmic, catchy monologues — "Easy Essays," most of which eventually appeared in his remarkable paper. Throughout he had the most humble, disarming conception of his own rôle.

Peter was a theoretician, a telling phrase-maker, an anarchist who hated the growing tyranny of the State, an itinerant visionary. Yet it is remarkable how much of the threefold original program he set before Dorothy Day came to be. Since 1933 the CW movement has founded thirty Houses of Hospitality, a number of farming communes and scores of discussion groups—all inspired by "voluntary poverty and the works of mercy." *The Catholic Worker* itself is today a fearless and highly original monthly with a circulation of 60,000. The movement has led directly to many related developments; labor schools (always a favorite idea of Peter's), the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists and Friendship Houses (interracial), among others. It has enlisted workers, capitalists, down-and-outs and capable young adherents by the thousands. It continues as a challenge to the complacent. And even to these last months Peter has been a guiding spirit there. May he rest in peace.

Germany Without Clay

WHEN GENERAL CLAY flew home, the public could not know what winds and currents and cross-currents brought him. But one of his remarkable characteristics permitted us to feel we knew what he thought about the situation he had left—Germany. (He does not submerge himself in the protective bunkum and indirection of bureaucratic brass.) He thinks Germany is started off right, and that the recent agreement of England, France and the US can "lead to the establishment of democratic government in Germany, which could be accepted into the European concept as rapidly as Germany's neighbors were prepared to accept Germany into that concept." Germany and Europe and the rest of us must hope that he is right, and that the determination and straightness which General Clay symbolized and led, will not be withdrawn or compromised now, with his very honorable retirement.

Britain's Experiment

BY A VOTE of 300 to 203, the British House of Commons has sent on to the House of Lords a bill to nationalize Britain's iron and steel industry. The bill will enable the government to form a holding corporation and to buy the stock of the big companies. In this way ownership will pass to the state while operation will remain in the hands of the present personnel.

As it is now, steel is not a financially shaky industry in Britain. Since it is not, and since steel, directly or indirectly, affects everything in an industrial economy, the proposal to nationalize this industry is considered the most important assault yet made on the capitalist, free enterprise system.

For this reason, the Labor government made ready for a fight. It limited the Lords' authority to delay action on parliamentary legislation, so that the bill might be passed before the 1950 general elections. It also prepared for a noisy debate with the Conservatives in Commons.

But strangely enough, there was little loud debating when Commons voted. Although the Lords will surely kick up opposition, there seemed to be on the surface only a mild-mannered reaction from the politically articulate British people on this issue, which may decide such a great part of their future.

Below the surface, however, the Conservatives think they hear rumblings. In Britain's last two elections, one in London and another a few days ago in both London and local areas throughout the island, the Tories have beaten Labor rather badly. This the Conservatives take as a sign of popular dissatisfaction with Labor's austere controls, a sign pointing to Labor's overthrow in 1950.

Since this optimism is based on the evidence of local elections in which local, rather than national, issues often determine the vote, there is not sufficient reason to interpret these victories as a change of wind in British politics. But even Labor admits that the elections do express a certain amount of popular distaste for the frugal living, taxes and controls it enforces in the interest of national recovery. Both parties are at least ready to admit that the electorate is awake. What might appear like a drowsy reaction in Commons to the steel bill is probably more accurately a sign of Britain's resignation to stand by the sacrifices implied in the Labor program it voted into office.

It would be surprising if the British electorate could be lulled by an increasing statism into a socialism which might imperil its political liberties. It has voted for, and watched its Labor government closely in the belief that a socialistically controlled economy need not swallow up other personal freedoms. Whether or not that combination of control and freedom is workable is the experimental question in post-war British government.

If steel is nationalized, it pushes economic restrictions closer and closer around the personal and political liberties. It poses more quietly the old antagonism between servitude and freedom. As the welfare state here, too, leans toward a more socialized economy, the British experiment with their democracy, as well as British apathy or enthusiasm for life under it, may be relevant and prophetic developments for us to watch.

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Report from Chile

Christian Democrats work for social reform before it is too late

Vincent J. Hope

THIS report is written by an observer who has been on the scene in Chile. There, as in other Latin countries, there is a Christian minority dissatisfied with the present social order. In attempting to reform it, they sometimes run up against fellow Catholics, who are supporting Conservative regimes.

In Chile, a Christian Democratic minority has formed the National Falange. The Falangists, who are trying to apply Catholic social principles and who have progressive clerical support, have nevertheless come under attack by certain members of the Catholic hierarchy who are in sympathy with the Conservatives. This article is an account of the ensuing conflict.

Put against the background of Spain and some Latin American countries, this effort by Chile's Christian Democrats fits into a larger pattern and may well be the concern of Catholics everywhere, who are both grieved at the disorder and heartened by the incipient courage within their own household.

THE INCREASING importance of Chile as an economic power in Latin America has not been sufficiently appreciated by the outside world for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, newspapers in Santiago can boast justifiably nowadays of the steady parade of visiting American bankers and industrialists who declare almost unanimously that Chile offers one of the soundest and most profitable fields for foreign investment south of the border today.

For besides the obvious factors of raw materials, hydroelectric power, adequate labor supply and transportation facilities, one must take into account the unusual advantage of political stability—which is certainly not characteristic of Latin American republics. This attractive condition can largely be attributed to the regime of President Gonzales, heir to the radical popular-front movement, who has outlawed his former Communist supporters and achieved some sort of working agreement with reactionary groups in the other two major parties—the wealthy Liberals and the aristocratic Catholic conservatives. These two groups, with the President's own Radical Party, are now able to control a majority in both houses of Congress whenever they can agree on a piece of legislation, as they did last year in ostracizing the Communists from politics. The present distribution in Congress, since the recent elections in March, except for a few seats still disputed, is as follows:

Radicals:	8 Senators, 34 Deputies
Liberals:	12 Senators, 31 Deputies
Conservatives:	9 Senators, 33 Deputies

That adds up to 29 Senators out of a total of 45, and 98 Deputies out of a total of 147. In addition there are at least eight other minor parties of varying strength and importance.

Since a bill to outlaw Communism was passed in the summer of 1948, the opposition has been reduced to the determined but ineffectual protests of these minority parties of which the National Falange, a Christian Democratic movement, is most noteworthy, because of its thoroughly Catholic approach to social problems, and its enlightened progressive program in general. This, of course, has not made it popular with Catholics of the upper classes, although its candidates did poll over 32,000 votes in the last election to gain one seat in the Senate and three in the Chamber of Deputies.

★

AT PRESENT, except for some half-hearted government attempts to check the inflationary trend, all talk of social and economic reform has been soft-pedaled and labor disturbances have been forcibly reduced to a minimum. All this, despite the fact that the cost of living has soared far above wage levels, and speculation in foodstuffs has reached scandalous proportions. Moreover, since the recently enacted anti-Communist legislation might readily be turned into a weapon to be used on troublesome labor unions, the very existence of this legislation acts as a strong deterrent to the legitimate ambitions of even moderate elements in organized labor. If that is not sufficient, the Congress has granted to the President extraordinary faculties which have been branded as dictatorial powers, by his political opponents.

In view of the tight control he can exercise, it is not surprising that Gonzalez's administration is able to present to the prospective foreign investor a picture of political and economic stability that is truly rare in this part of the world.

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Yet beneath the surface of this peaceful scene lies all the pent-up dissension and unrest arising from the chronic discontent of the urban and rural masses, who have never enjoyed an equitable share in the national wealth and resources. For a while they were attracted to Communism, and even though the Party is now proscribed, many still adhere to its ideology. How many, it is impossible even to guess. Enough, anyway, to make clandestine printshops worthwhile. But the majority have been restrained by their loyalty to the Church which, however, is handicapped in this situation by its well known, traditional sympathy for the Conservative Party.

Whatever disadvantage this pro-Conservative sympathy may have been in the past, it is a very serious one today when the Church's social teaching needs to be presented clearly and fearlessly—regardless of who might take scandal at it. For while Chile is embarking on a great program of industrial expansion, her basic problems of social and economic theory still remain to be solved. Yet some of the obvious solutions are not acceptable to either the industrialists or to the aristocratic landowning class. They have usually considered a benevolent paternalism, at best, as an adequate substitute for economic freedom, whtich is what the rural proletariat in particular still lack.

★

HOWEVER THERE are signs of a change. Especially significant during the past year was a heated controversy over the orthodoxy of Jacques Maritain—a controversy that brought out clearly the profound disagreement existing among Catholics as to what the Popes meant when they pleaded for the reconstruction of the social order.

The origin of the controversy is related to the courageous program of the Falangist Party, which has relied heavily on the writings of Maritain as well as on the labor encyclicals to justify their demands for better wages, better housing, etc., for the working man and his family. This Party was founded some ten years ago by a group of young Conservatives who were dissatisfied with the extremely reactionary policies of their party leaders in the face of the glaring social injustice inflicted on the poor. While their ideals were derived from Catholic social principles, the detailed development and application of these ideals have largely been borrowed from such works of Maritain as *Integral Humanism, The Rights of Man and the Natural Law, The Temporal Regime and Liberty, The Primacy of the Spiritual,* and *The Principles of a Humanist Politic.* Naturally they have been denounced for their efforts as radicals, traitors to their class and even as crypto-communists. They have been severely criticized by *El Diario Illustrado,* the Conservative, semi-official Catholic paper in Santiago, which sees the hand of Moscow in every threat to change the established order. Due to the Falangists' outspoken sympathy with a coal miners' strike in 1947, they were nearly compelled by Church authorities to dissolve the party. But Bishop Manuel Larrain of Talca came to their defense and they were allowed to continue. Later their sincere opposition to some anti-communist legislation brought renewed criticism.

Despite their defeat in Congress, they did incidentally precipitate a long overdue and welcome crisis within the Conservative Party, which was split into a progressive and a reactionary group. That only intensified the determination of their opponents to have them condemned, or at least, to alienate their Catholic supporters. This strategy was quite openly revealed in August, 1948, when Monseñor Luis Perez, a Canon of Santiago Cathedral, published a 90-page pamphlet, entitled *Estudio de Filosofia Politico-Social.* Ostensibly an objective study of various false trends in modern theories of society, it turned out to be in reality a violent and unscrupulous attack on the orthodoxy of Jacques Maritain in order to defend the bourgeois Christianity and the semi-feudal class-system still so prevalent in Chile.

★

THE MAIN ARGUMENT as proposed in Chapter III of Perez's book is that Maritain teaches a form of theological liberalism akin to that held by Lammenais, which the Church has repeatedly condemned. If this were true, then of course no Catholic could in good faith follow Maritain, let alone publicize his theories. To prove his point, Perez quoted extensively from Maritain—texts which, he maintained, clearly indicated a belief in dogmatic tolerance: that is, the toleration of all religions and even of atheism, as a good in itself and not merely as a lesser evil or a necessary expedient in view of the great divergence of creeds in modern society.

While Perez admits that the full rigor of the Catholic thesis, "error has no rights," must be mitigated at times according to the requirements of a given situation, but only by way of exception, Maritain, he asserts, would impose no limits of time or place to such expedient toleration, and in fact has made a general rule or thesis out of the exceptions. This error is alleged to be found in *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law,* although, according to his custom, Perez gives no page references. Neither is any indication given that Maritain had previously dealt with this same subject at much greater length in other works, such as: *The Primacy of the Spiritual, Integral Humanism,* and *The Temporal Regime*

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and Liberty, which are more technical and consequently more precise treatises. Yet this was the chief basis for the attack, apparently because it seemed to be a most vulnerable point and could most easily be twisted into the semblance of heresy. In practice it is no longer a problem, for civil toleration of all religions has been provided for since 1865 in the Chilean Constitution.

The ideas which are really so offensive to Perez and his Conservative friends are much less susceptible to misrepresentation and much more pertinent to economic questions. They are all to be found in Chapter VI, in which he inveighs bitterly against such innovations as the exaltation of democracy, the overstressing of the dignity of the human person, the right of free association, the limiting of civil authority by free citizens, universal suffrage, the abolition of all artificial class distinctions, the extension of the ideal of brotherhood to economic and political relationships and the intellectual emancipation of the masses. All these notions, he declares, are in opposition to Catholic social principles and exercise a pernicious influence on immature minds. The traditional Christian society of the past, founded on the idea of a rigid hierarchy of classes, now faces a serious threat to its existence, he fears, in the new, dangerous philosophy of the pluralistic state. His laments all sound very objective and disinterested with just a touch of the "laudator temporis acti" mood.

But anyone who has seen the terrible slums of Santiago, or who knows something of inhuman working conditions and pitiful wages on the great fundos, or who has heard of the staggering mortality rate for infants, (three times that of the US in 1945) is not easily convinced that Christian social principles have much influence on this harsh economic system. He is bound to suspect that there are ulterior motives behind this overzealous defence of a supposedly Catholic organization of society which has failed to secure even elementary justice for the rank and file.

*

ALL SUCH suspicions were amply confirmed in December, 1948, with the appearance of a little book called *La Ortodoxia de Maritain,* written by Father Julio Jimenez, S.J. of the Theological Faculty of the Catholic University in Santiago. From the strictly objective viewpoint of a scholar (he has his doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome) he gave a complete refutation to every charge made against Maritain's orthodoxy. With incontrovertible evidence and patient logic, he answered every false accusation, unravelled all the twisted reasoning and exposed the misquotations and garbled texts on which Perez had so carefully built up his case. He clearly demonstrated, with abundant quotations, accurately cited, that Maritain's theory of civil tolerance never conflicts but is wholly reconcilable with the ideals of a Christian state as laid down by Leo XIII in his encyclical *Immortale Dei.*

With similar facility he disposed of the other alleged errors, many of which can be found also in *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno.* Finally he quoted the extraordinarily high personal commendation which Pope Pius XII gave Maritain in 1945, when he took up his duties as French Ambassador to the Vatican. "We esteem in J. Maritain . . . a man who, making open profession of his Catholic faith and of his devotion to the philosophy of the Common Doctor, has dedicated his high talents to the service of the great doctrinal and moral principles which the Church, especially in these times of universal trial, never tires of teaching to the world." Comment on such words is superfluous.

The publication a few weeks later of Jaime Castillo's book, *Defensa de Maritain,* an excellent summary and commentary on the controversy, was rather an anti-climax. But while Jimenez had limited himself to a strictly textual criticism, Castillo filled in the background, which brought out more clearly the local significance of the issues. Although he never mentioned the Falangists, no one could doubt that they had been the real target of this attack. Maritain's reputation is far too solid and secure to be really endangered by such irresponsible polemics. What was really being attacked was the right of the Falangists, or of any progressive minority, to criticize the decadent bourgeois-capitalist system with all its cynical injustices, and to work for a Christian revolution of the social order before it is too late.

For the time being, at least, that right has been vindicated in one corner of the world. At present then, there is hope of realizing the redemption of the Chilean proletariat by making economic freedom something more than a pharisaical platitude. Even if the Falange fails to become a major political party and a respected force in government, its courageous leaders must always be credited with having proclaimed in plain language and bold deeds that the future of the Church is and must be the future of the oppressed workers, of the poor, the weak and the outcast.

In fact, it seems that the only peaceful future for Chile also will be to accompany the Church in returning to the masses, if she hopes to forestall ambitious extremists of both the right and left wing. Some of her younger statesmen are becoming aware now of the choice to be made, but their time for decision seems to be perilously brief. Next year may be too late. Perhaps it is too late already.

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The Responsibilities of the Catholic Novelist

Getting "the meaning of the world" straight — a matter of realism

Bruce Marshall

FROM time to time there is discussion in the Catholic press as to what constitutes the essence of what is perhaps inappropriately called the Catholic Novel. Catholic novelists, it is usually assumed, should write Catholic Novels and Catholic Novels should deal exclusively with the doings, preferably virtuous, of Catholics. I do not agree. I think that a novelist who is a Catholic (this is the term which Mr. Graham Greene prefers) should be free to write about any subject or experience whatever, provided he writes about them under the aspect of eternity.

Jacques Maritain has summed up the standpoint from which the Catholic novelist ought to be judged: "The essential point is not to know whether a novelist may or may not portray a given aspect of evil. The essential point is to know at what altitude he is when he makes this portrayal and whether his art and his soul are pure enough and strong enough to make it *without conniving* at it." (The italics are mine.) It is non-conniving which distinguishes the work of Graham Greene and of Evelyn Waugh from that of their contemporaries who merely write well. Mr. Greene and Mr. Waugh have got the meaning of the world right and their contemporaries have got it wrong.

*

I stress my view that the Catholic novelist may write about murder in Baluchistan or chorus girls in the Folies Bergères provided that he gets the meaning of the world right behind them. It is the supernatural screen that matters and not whether the characters who move in front of the screen are contemplatives or thugs. Literature, as Mr. Greene has pointed out in a recently published correspondence with Elizabeth Bowen, has nothing to do with edification. Works of edification, however, if they are to persuade, ought to have something to do with literature, and unfortunately this rarely happens. There is nothing like the average tract for confirming the wayward in their misdemeanors.

FOR IF IT is important to get the meaning of the world right it is also important to get the accidents of the world right. And one of the chief accidents of the world today is that the majority of human beings entirely fail to get the meaning of the world right. The importance of Mr. Greene as a novelist is that he never fails to get both the meaning and the accidents of the world right.

The fact, however, that the majority of contemporary novelists write about those who have got the meaning of the world wrong would seem to exempt the Catholic novelist from also writing about them, were it not for the fact that the preoccupation of the majority makes it important that the wrong sort of people should be written about by the right sort of novelist, if only to get the background right. When this has been said let me state that in my opinion it is also important that the Catholic novelist should write also about the still many people in the world who have not only got the meaning of the world right but try to rhyme their own conduct with their interpretation. This is important for two reasons: firstly, in order that the meaning of the world may be made more clearly known; and, secondly, in order that readers may realize that the world is not entirely populated by racketeers whose sole ambition is to cheat their way to fugitive bliss on black market petrol. This second point is more important than may at first appear. The theory implicit in the novels of Guy de Maupassant and Anatole France that the ignoble motive invariably conquers the noble was not a little responsible for the defeat of France in 1940.

But even when he is writing about those who have got the meaning of the world right the Catholic novelist must be careful not to be overzealous. He must guard himself against the suspicion of distorting the accidents of life in order to point a moral. Indeed he should attempt to point no moral at all, because his moral is his background. His duty as a Catholic novelist writing about real Catholics is to write about them as ordinary human beings who sometimes

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succeed and more often fail. If his sinners are not as real as his saints the uninstructed reader may conclude that the ideal which inspires the novelist is as false as his portrayal of his fellow-men.

How important is accurate representation of fact we may realize more clearly when he look at the Communists. Because of their invariably self-righteous pictures of their adherents the Communists are beginning to disillusion even their fellow-travelers. Dean Hewlett Johnson's myopia about the buccaneers in the Kremlin makes his eulogies of communism as tiresome to read as the late Dean Farrar's equally well-intentioned slop about public schools. And Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Fall of Paris* failed to convince because of the inflexible altruism of the Communist characters. Propagandists will never succeed until they are honest enough to admit both their own shortcomings and the virtues of their opponents.

★

NOR IS IT only his blacks and his whites and his greys that the Catholic novelist must get right if he is to persuade non-Catholics to read about Catholics. It is equally important that he should get his language right. Here again the Communists serve as a terrible warning. By their persistent misuse of language they have turned terms of abuse into compliments, so that even left-wing Socialists smile when they are called reactionary fascist war-mongers in the simultaneously inspired and uninspired editorials of *Pravda*. But it is not only insults that can be worn meaningless. Rhetoric and repetition rust the language of idealism as well, with the result that statesmen hinder rather than promote peace when they talk of blueprints for the future. And, if it is not impertinent for a layman to say this, many sermons fail to percolate from the ear to the heart simply because the majority of preachers use verbal reach-me-downs instead of trying to clothe their thought word by word.

One of the reasons why secular literature has such a wide appeal is that it is generally so much better written than the literature of edification. Aldous Huxley and Ernest Hemingway have won their large publics not because they sometimes write about the sins of the flesh but because they always write good English. It is fallacy to imagine that the public is anxious to read only about young women tossing their two-piece bathing suits over the windmill; the public is anxious to read about any form of human experience decently related. Cardinal Wiseman used to tell his seminary-trained priests that they would find the university-trained clergymen of the Church of England their superiors in all instruction except theology. Similarly, the best of the secular writers are generally more able writers than the best of the religious writers, and it is because of their good writing rather than because of their connivance with the world that they are so widely read. Literature as such will always find a public. The late Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop* was read not because it was a novel about an archbishop but because it was a well-written novel about an archbishop.

★

PERHAPS because the majority of novels published are frivolous there is a tendency, chiefly among ecclesiastics, to regard the reading of novels as a not very worthy form of relaxation. This, I think, is an error. Biography and tracts and theological treatises are not the only forms of serious literature. The serious novel, when it is written, is just as serious and often more serious. And it is so because it presents human life in a round and related form and reaches a wider public which it instructs all the more effectively by appearing only to entertain.

A great many of the same public which read Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop* probably also read Giuseppe Berto's *The Sky Is Red,* which, I think, got the meaning of the world wrong. They read the latter book for the same reason as they read the former: because it was as accurate literature about bombed Italian cities as the other was accurate literature about missionary archbishops. The reading public is always willing to read convincing descriptions of modes of existence with which it is unfamiliar. I myself know nothing about the navy and I was once seasick on a cruise round the Bass Rock, but I never fail to read a novel by Mr. C. S. Forrester, because his descriptions of seafaring life enlarge my experience of all forms of life.

The Catholic novelist who would write about ecclesiastical life has, therefore, a large public waiting for him. He will, however, reach it only on two conditions. The first condition is that he must be a good craftsman and write as well about priests as other good novelists write about stockbrokers and menders of penny-in-the-slot machines. The second condition is that he must not use the novel as a pulpit. If he breaks the canons and personally addresses the reader in an attempt to proselytize he will persuade only the already converted and some of these he may send back to the bottle and misconception about the Trinity. Quite apart from the technical inadmissibility of such a procedure, propaganda of any sort is distrusted these days when, rightly or wrongly, everybody is suspected of talking from his brief.

When he observes these two rules the Catholic novelist writing about Catholics possesses an advantage over his secular competitors occupied

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with the not very varied geometry of applied adultery. He is writing to such an extent about those who understand the meaning of the world that he can almost be said to be writing about the meaning of the world. For even atheists know that stockbroking and mending penny-in-the-slot machines cannot be the meaning of the world. The meaning of the world is either the Beatific Vision or the cold thing that lies at the bottom of test tubes.

★

BUT WRITING about the meaning of the world does not mean distorting the accidents of the world. "A novel is a mirror taking a walk along a high road," Stendhal once said. Although in an ecclesiastical novel one does not expect to meet monsignori who blister like sergeants-major; one of the chief virtues of sanctity is that it is practiced by ordinary men and women in an everyday world of bibbers and tipplers, pirates and mountebanks. And even when the mirror is held up in the cloisters and corridors of monasteries and presbyteries it is bound to reflect a few people who are a little shaky about the Divine Praises. Even when writing about saints the novelist has got to make the sinners come to life in order to make the whole picture true. This leads us to the question of realism.

Perhaps because of the novels of Emile Zola realism has been identified with the portrayal of misconduct to the exclusion of virtue. This is, of course, a restricted realism since the activities of men and women are not entirely confined to slitting one another's throats, inventing atom bombs and listening to crooners on the radio. Men and women pray and try to be good as well, and very often the same men and women as slit the throats, invent the atom bombs and listen to the crooners do the praying and the trying. True realism must therefore include the noble as well as the ignoble, the glow as well as the mud. Both the exclusively sordid and the exclusively romantic give a false picture of life and one is as dangerous as the other. In a novel like *Bodies and Souls* Maxence Van der Meersch has used Zola's technique with his own knowledge of the meaning of the world to present a real world, with all its hideous temporalities seen under the aspect of eternity.

It is this combined knowledge of the horrible things and of the hope, of the facts and of the faith, which have enabled both Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh to make such noteworthy contributions to contemporary literature. It is impossible for an intelligent person to read either *The Heart of the Matter* or *Brideshead Revisited* without feeling the supernatural screen let down behind the action of the characters. Even in *The Loved One* the supernatural screen is there, although I think that it is only Catholics who will fully understand Waugh's wrath with those who dishonor the awe of death by trying to tell a sweet smelling lie about it.

But one has only to watch the average matron exchanging her library books on a Saturday morning to realize that the majority of novel readers are not intelligent. And that is why I think that it is important that Catholic novelists should write at least occasionally about those who try to keep the commandments instead of about those who flout them. There have been so many people writing about the sinners that it has become almost an article of faith among the unenlightened to believe that saints do not exist; and from this conception to the tolerance of power politics is but a short step. There are in the world at least as many people trying to be good behind closed doors as there are people leading evil lives behind closed doors, and it is important that those who live in a disillusioned age should hear about them. But the picture must be a complete picture and churchmen must not be shown as infallible when it is only the Church that is infallible. Even a bishop *in partibus* who eats pork chops on Ash Wednesdays attains supernatural significance when his gluttony is portrayed against the proper background; and the proper background is the knowledge of the meaning of the world.

Communications

NATIONAL HEALTH

Chicago 37, Illinois

TO THE Editors: On April 8 THE COMMONWEAL printed an article on Home Rule Rent Control. It was not a very long article. It did not need length, for its writer had a sense of conviction that helped him get beneath the hard crust of ideological arguments and handle the problem of virtue and necessity. He looked at the people, not at the agitated theories. Because he looked at the people he saw the good; he did not fall victim to words.

Reading that article made it a little easier to be a Catholic—this, in my mind, is the primary function of a Catholic periodical.

But this was all a month ago. On May 6 you deserted the people. Perhaps you fell before the barrage of words, or perhaps you fled in fear, but you did not stay with the riders of street cars. For no one, who knows the beauty and the dumbness of those who have been died for, could have written your article on National Health. The phraseology, the very diction, was "slick"; more like *Time* or *Newsweek;* more secular than Christian.

> It seems only proper that President Truman, devoted as he is to early morning "constitutionals" should have some ideas about keeping the rest of the

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country in the pink, too. . . . What he proposes, fair or not, is at least a big deal.

I know that the fear of centralization is well founded. I know that your fear does not come from reading the *Tribune* editorials or the A.M.A. pamphlets, but rather from reading Hegel and Marx. But I wonder if we will find our answers in the great printed works. Since Health Insurance concerns people perhaps the beautiful and the dumb can supply the answers. Perhaps we should give more than a glance to the British people and the Swedish people, and then stare (if we can) at Chicago; a city that is more than twice divided.

I really believe that we need empirical knowledge before we can judge. I really believe that we should sit on the long wooden benches of the clinic halls along with the "charity cases" who wait for ambitious medical students to test newly acquired pieces of knowledge. I really think that we should ask God to make us ill in one of the awful areas where there are no medical students. Perhaps that is the only way to grasp the desperateness of the situation. Perhaps then, and only then, will we stop talking in terms of "restricting private initiative" or waiting until "local meaures have broken down."

The Australian bishops' distinction between socialism and socialization is a vital one and one which, I believe, THE COMMONWEAL has failed to make. Yet I do not ask you to make it. Rather, I ask you to re-examine your statement that the "Advocates of voluntary health programs have the merit of believing in our political tradition." I do not experience disloyalty when I repudiate that tradition. I do not believe that our political tradition has ever known Christ's name; the roots of capitalistic democracy are deep in the hard and brittle gold mines.

I ask you, too, to remember that Charity does not think evil, and that the suspicion that Truman is not terribly concerned with safeguarding human liberties can hardly be considered virtuous. We have no right to think that the writers of the bill inserted the clause allowing doctors to participate or not did so without a belief that their action was wise.

I ask you for a greater charity, and I tell you that, apart from the sacraments, grace comes through people; but it does not come through ideas or written words. This is not a repudiation of scholarship, but scholarship must never force us to desert those who have been died for.

ROBERT J. CHARLES.

AN EXPLANATION

Sunnyside, Wash.

TO THE Editors: Some time ago you carried an advertisement which had my name in bold print, but I read through the different issues without even noticing it, until somebody kidded me about it a few days ago. Now that I have seen it, I think I owe those who read it, a bit amazed I guess, an explanation.

The lecture bureau involved sent me an invitation to take a pilgrimage to Rome in 1950. Since I hoped to celebrate an anniversary in that year and since I know the shrines and churches of Europe so well, my reluctance to become a cicerone vanished. However there was a catch, I added, when I accepted, and this catch was that I did not feel sufficiently equipped to maintain the high level of a real pilgrimage. Instead I proposed to take "outsiders" and to go along as an interpreter of things religious, historical, artistic, sociological, etc. These outsiders, I thought, would be educated and sincere non-Catholics who when comparing Michelangelo and a church furnished from catalogues of ecclasiastical hardware stores, would say: are they children of the same mother? I would have liked to let them see Avila, e.g., with readings from Saint Teresa, and make them understand that what we criticize so harshly is only a victim of bourgeois blight, since the Catholic Church has below the muddy surface waters the pure, clear and stony wellsprings which make it last until doomsday.

To some well-meaning Protestants, the Church appears to be a *"complexus oppositorium,"* a big machine of spiritual power coasting along on the historical merits of the past. I have a notion which may be completely wrong but which I would like to try out, and that is, that a "historical pilgrimage" vicariously performed by a person and a group of persons will bring about an experience which will, I hope, revise the image so many well-intentioned outsiders have of the Church and which no talking, arguing, proving and no apologetics can overcome. Before I put this idea on the shelf, I feel I should at least make an attempt to explain it.

H. A. REINHOLD.

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS

San Francisco, Cal.

TO THE Editors: After reading the letter of Joseph Dahmus of Penn. State in THE COMMONWEAL of May 6, one begins to wonder if the Allied Nations did not make a horrible mistake in not joining up with those misunderstood Germans, and giving France the trouncing she justly deserved.

Alas, poor Germany, who because of the evil machinations of the French politicians and a birth-controlled populace was forced into adopting such protective measures as dive bombers, rockets, bake ovens, and health reorts, which we culgarly called concentration camps.

Perhaps it could be arranged that we guarantee Germany that in the future we would safeguard her against any French aggression. But if we permit Germany to again resort to protective measures such as she has done in the past, we are just plain idiots.

EDWARD A. WILDERSON.

APPEALS FROM ABROAD

REV. C. MARX of Cortil-Noirmont (Chastre), Belgium, asks for donations for his poor parish; the church was partly destroyed in the war and the church bells taken; funds are also needed for the school. One of our readers in Paris asks for aid for Mons. l'Abbé Vulliez of Joigny-sur-Yonne, Yonne, France,

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"who is now struggling to finance and equip his vacation camp in the Haute Savoie for boys and girls of different ages—also for mothers with babies, to give them the mountain air and a change from the damp climate. Some CARE packages would be greatly appreciated."

CARE and SAFE food and clothing packages are also greatly needed by:

Rev. Mother M. Paula
Marienberg
Bappard am Fels
Rhineland, Br. Zone, Germany

Rev. Mother Johanna Evangelista
Kalvarienberg
Ahrweiler
Rhineland, Br. Zone, Germany

Helpers of the Holy Souls
79 Martinstrasse
Vienna 18, Austria
American Sector

Rev. Mother Superior
Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus
Steinfeld/uber Trall (Eifel)
Western Zones, Germany

St. Clare's Monastery
Via Vitellia
(Ang. Via Casaletto)
Rome, Italy

Food and clothing packages ($10 for the standard ones) may be ordered from CARE, 50 Broad Street, New York, N. Y.; $10 speed vouchers, which provide food delivery within a week of order, may be procured from SAFE, 40 Exchange Place, New York, N. Y.

The Screen

"There Is Nothing Like a Dame"

THIS WEEK'S movie fare presents us with three films that show us women at their illogical best. *"One Woman's Story,"* a handsomely made English importation, tells the sad tale of a gal who just couldn't make up her mind between the security offered by her wealthy husband and the love offered by her ex-boyfriend. Most of this shifting back and forth between the men is revealed through a series of flashbacks covering some nine years; by the time the woman has decided to play safe and stick by her husband, this poor guy is so overwrought by jealousy he decides to sue for divorce. The wife then rushes out intending to throw herself under the nearest subway train. What makes this picture worth at least some of your attention is its good acting (Ann Todd as the beautiful but indecisive wife, Claude Rains as the cold-blooded husband whose cat-and-mouse maneuvers are fascinating, and Trevor Howard as the lover) and the direction of David Lean who manages in spite of the tricky flashbacks to keep the story and moods straight. The script by Eric Ambler stems from an H. G. Wells novel and seems to consider that freedom to come and go in marriage is the most important thing. Americans seeing this film are likely to get the idea that the English are so well-bred and refined that they talk their love rather than feel it.

The "lady" in *"The Lady Gambles"* is equally confused in her thinking, but at least this picture makes some attempt to show how she got that way. This is another exercise in flashbacks, during most of which the husband relates to a doctor the heart-rending story of his wife who was tied to her sister by a silver chord and who finally became so obsessed with gambling that she went on a big binge, from which there was almost no return to reality. Actually this movie has several interesting ideas and its use of gambling as an escape mechanism for this woman who is tied up in knots in a guilt complex is quite sound. The story gets somewhat melodramatic at times, but the piece has been well directed by Michael Gordon, and is effectively acted by Barbara Stanwyck as the Woman, Robert Preston as her husband and Stephen McNally a a big-time gambler who is attracted to Barbara—either because of or in spite of her obsession. As with the alcoholic movies that turned up a couple of years ago, this film makes clear that its heroine is a sick woman and needs psychiatry more than censure. I hope moviegoers don't get the idea, however, that all gamblers, even the twentieth-cent-a-point bridge variety, should be analyzed.

I don't know why the makers of *"Night Unto Night"* thought this Philip Wylie story was suitable for movie purposes; but in any case the result is a hopped-up melodrama smothered in gloom that is relieved every now and then by the idea that life is worth living in spite of all its sadness. The story concerns a widow (Viveca Lindfors) who keeps hearing the voice of her dead husband. When she finally stops brooding and hearing the voices, she starts devoting herself to a biochemist (Ronald Reagan) who has rented her house. This unfortunate man is a victim of epilepsy, which keeps growing worse and is particularly bad in this case because he is alergic to the medicine he needs. Furthermore the widow's neurotic sister (Osa Massen) starts making advances on the helpless biochemist who is contemplating suicide. One night, these three, plus several friends and a doctor are gathered in the house when a hurricane blows down on them. Well, I tell ya, folks, things are terrific. But you'll be glad to know that what with all the film's symbols and pretentious metaphysics, it does not end in suicide. It is interesting, by the way, that all three of these films use suicide attempts as part of their plot machinations. I hope this is not so much a new cinematic trend as it is an expression of the characters' dissatisfaction with themselves.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Catholic International News

Strike in Quebec

PARISH churches throughout the Quebec and Montreal Archdioceses are taking up special collections every Sunday for the families of the 4,500 workers in the asbestos mines 80 miles West of here, who have been on strike since February 15. The collections were started Sunday, May 8, and were authorized by Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau, of Montreal, who asked that they continue "'till the end of the strike."

The strike at the mines in Asbestos and Thetford Mines, Quebec, which supply 90 per cent of the world's asbestos, has been declared illegal by the Provincial Government. Demands of the idle miners include a wage increase to bring basic wages to $1 an hour, improved efforts by the company to combat the dust danger of amiantosis, a form of silicosis, and acceptance of the Rand formula by which non-union members are employed provided they pay dues in return for union advantages.

The strikers are members of the Confederation of Canadian Catholic Workers, which has floated a $100,000 fund to purchase food and supplies for members' families. Miners from Asbestos assemble every afternoon at three at their union headquarters to march to the nearby church for recitation of the Rosary. The entire community made a pilgrimage to pray for the strike's end.

Archbishop Charbonneau has strongly denounced certain social conditions "which permit a conspiracy which the Church regards as its duty to oppose." "We wish for social peace," he declared, "but we do not wish the crushing of the working class. . . ."

(Montreal, 5/13—CIP.)

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RECENT strikes in the Province of Quebec and the active role which Catholic labor unions (CTC) played in them have drawn renewed attention to the principles on which these unions are based. Sharp criticism was expressed in an advertisement published widely by one of the struck Companies, the Canadian John Manville Co., Ltd., over the signature of its Chairman, Lewis H. Brown. After paying tribute to the influence of the Catholic Church in Quebec, Mr. Brown claimed that the Catholic labor unions, founded with the double aim of forestalling radicalism and bettering the workers' conditions, have fallen into radical hands.

In recent years, Mr. Brown alleged, the Catholic unions stopped using the word "Catholic" in their name, began to "preach a doctrine opposing capitalism and upholding a philosophy that is more closely akin to communism or socialism," and sought to "secure for themselves certain controls over managerial policy."

This manner of judging the role of the unions and the Church's attitude towards labor is being denounced in Catholic circles, even outside the labor movement, as unjustified. "The leaders of the Catholic unions may or may not have been right in the conduct of their negotiations," the English-language Catholic weekly, *The Ensign,* declared editorially May 7, "but it is entirely unwarranted and unhelpful for any employer to cast doubts on the orthodoxy of their basic convictions. . . .

"It is evident from his remarks that Mr. Brown believes Catholicism to be a socially conservative force, anxious to support the existing capitalistic order, and willing to have the workers remain mere 'hands' so long as they are paid a tolerable wage. . . . Nor is it true that the Church's social teachings are conservative. Catholicism is radical in the true sense of the word, and by no means upholds capitalism as it has developed. . . . The present leaders of the Catholic unions would only be following Papal directives if they sought to elevate what had heretofore been mere wage contracts into some form of partnership."

Ottawa, 5/14—CIP.)

Press Control in U. S. Zone

ALTHOUGH the Christian Democrats are the largest political party in the American Zone of Germany, members of the Social Democratic (Socialist) Party have received by far the largest number of licenses for the publication of newspapers, according to a statistical survey in the Almanac of the *Frankfurter Rundschau,* a leftist daily newspaper appearing in Frankfurt. Out of 104 licensees who publish 54 newspapers, 44 are Social Democrats, 26 Christian Democrats, 17 Liberal Democrats, and 15 are listed as "non-party members."

In Bavaria, where the Christian Democrats obtained 52.4% of the votes, they hold 40% of the newspaper licenses (18) while the Social Democrats, with only 28.2% of the votes, hold 47% (21).

In Wuerttemberg-Baden, the American authorities have assigned 40% of the newspaper licenses to Social Democrats, 32% to Liberal Democrats and only 16% to Christian Democrats, although the Christian Democrats obtained 39%, the Social Democrats 32%, and the Liberal Democrats 19% of the votes.

In editorial influence, the Christian Democrats are even weaker than might appear from these figures because when there are two licensees for a newspaper, one is usually assigned responsibility for editorial policies and the other is the business manager. In a majority of cases where licensees belong to different parties, Social Democrats have been placed in charge of the editorial departments.

In the "Political Handbook of the World" for 1949, published by the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, the Editors of the 45 principal papers in the United States Zone of Germany are labeled as follows: 21 Social Democrat, 9 Christian Democrat, 5 Liberal Democrat, 2 Communist, 1 "leftist," 7 "no political affiliation." The "Political Handbook" lists 45 of the 54 papers licensed in the American Zone.

(New York 5/14—CIP.)

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Of Note

The Young Christian Workers

THE JOC, or Young Christian Workers, are celebrating their Silver Jubilee and Pope Pius XII has addressed a special letter to their founder and chaplain-general, Canon Cardijn of Belgium. The message, published in the London *Tablet,* says in part:

> In God's plan it [the YCW] came at the right moment to help solve a problem which is not peculiar to any country or continent. In our time the Christian conscience is faced with the condition of a great number of workers whose most precious possessions, faith in God, supernatural life and the salvation of their souls, are in grave danger. The ideal that inspired you from the outset was, beginning with the young, to bring them—or to bring them back—to Christ and the Church. This ideal you, in your turn, have transmitted to thousands of upright and generous hearts. . . .
>
> The YCW, in the coming memorable Congress, will show to the world how much more it has done and wherein lies its true greatness. This is its deep Christian training, the apostolic and conquering enthusiasm that it instils in its members. These young heralds of the good cause are like the leaven in the lump, fearlessly confessing their faith in the face of those who have lost it, of those who despise it, of those who fight against it. We are too appreciative of the merits of these young workers, boys and girls, who care nothing for the mockery and gibes they encounter and who pursue with perseverance their work of conquest, not to accord them here the praise that they have earned. May they continue, and may their enthusiasm never wane. At this decisive point in history, present conditions demand their apostolate more strongly than ever.
>
> Each social group has an important role to play in the transformation that the world is undergoing, and it is only too clear that the working class, in matters that concern it, is called today to assume responsibilities that it has never known in the past. It is not less clear that many of its members have been carried away by a false ideal of human redemption, and claim that in the erroneous theories of atheistic materialism are to be found the only solutions to the anguishing problems of the world of work. One cannot hope to solve these problems by a negative attitude or a simple warning against false shepherds. What is needed is the active presence in factories and workplaces of pioneers who are fully conscious of their double vocation—as Christians and as workers—and who are bent on assuming their responsibilities to the full, knowing neither peace nor rest until they have transformed the environment of their lives to the demands of the Gospel. The Church, by this positive, constructive work, will be able to extend her life-giving action to the millions of souls for whom she has a maternal and ardent solicitude. And it is in this sublime task that the Young Christian Worker leaders, trained by the YCW, are called to share.
>
> They will find the strength to accomplish this work, which must seem superhuman, in the practice of a sacramental and eucharistic life which becomes ever deeper, in a constant union with the Master of all purity, of all love and of all apostolate: our Savior, Jesus Christ; and in a filial appeal to His Mother, the most holy Virgin Mary. They will find it, too, in following loyally and generously the directions of the Hierarchy, and especially the social teaching of the Church, and in a fraternal and happy cooperation with the other movements of Catholic Action, with a view to submitting the whole of society to the rule of God. . . .

State, Church and School

IN THE May issue of the *Catholic Educational Review* (Catholic University of America, Washington 17, D. C.), M. J. McKeough, O. Praem., the Editor in Chief, introduces an article on the American school question:

> . . . All three of these societies, the family, the state, and the Church, exist for the welfare of man, and since education is necessary for the complete development of man and the fulfilment of his purpose it is a legitimate matter of concern to these three societies. The question that is agitating the minds of man is the right and responsibility that each society has in providing this education. Before attempting to answer it, I must make two preliminary statements. First, a child is born immediately into a family and the primary right and obligation for his care belongs to the parents. They are by nature the child's first teachers, and the home is his first school. Since in practically all instances the parents are not adequately equipped or do not have the facilities to give their children all the formal education which they need, a formally organized school is necessary. It is however a means to an end; it has no rights of its own. The question that concerns us is the relationship of the school to the church or the state or to both.
>
> That the state has rights in education, though once disputed, is now conceded by all. Likewise that the Church through the authority granted to her by her Founder and by the very nature of her function, has the right to educate is claimed by all her adherents. It is conceded though that the state has the right not only to conduct schools of her own but to pass compulsory attendance laws, binding upon all children, and to exercise at least as much supervision over all schools, private as well as public, as is necessary to safeguard her own existence, the welfare of the children, and the good of our democratic society. . . .

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Mind and/or Machine

ANTHONY STANDEN

Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine. Norbert Wiener. Wiley. $3.00.

WHEN NORBERT WIENER, (who was a Harvard Ph.D. at the age of 18), now Professor of Mathematics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a distinguished scientist, says "animal," he means to include man. Animals, including man, are controlled by their brains and nervous systems. Machines can be controlled by extremely complex electronic mechanisms, which are, of course, man-made. The ever-increasing apparent similarities between the two mechanisms, the nervous system and the machine, are the subject of this book, under the name "Cybernetics," from the Greek *cybernetes*—steersman. It is an exceedingly interesting book—one might be tempted to call it an *important* book, if that adjective were not so overworked as to constitute damning with faint praise. For in dealing with the question, Is the human brain a mechanism?, it leads to a further question of genuine importance, Is the human mind a mechanism?

Machines have now reached a degree of development hard to believe. In a short note, Professor Wiener speculates about the possibility of making a machine to play chess, and he concludes that one could be made which would play tolerably well. More seriously, he says "We are already in a position to construct artificial machines of almost any degree of elaborateness of performance." One possible example is a device to be used with anti-aircraft guns, which will aim the gun at the point which the airplane is expected to reach by the time the shell reaches it, not only if the airplane moves in a straight course, but even if it continues in a curved path. Another is the modern computing machine, of breath-taking mathematical ability.

To design these machines required the cooperation of mathematicians, electronic engineers and many other scientists. The group got together with physiologists who were trying to understand the workings of the nervous system, and they found that once they had surmounted the obstacle of their utterly different vocabularies, they appeared to be talking the same language. Calculating machines are built up of a very large number of electronic tubes, which are either "on" or "off;" this is similar to the "all-or-nothing" principle of the action of neurons. A control mechanism (such as automatic steering gear for a ship) may get into a state of wild oscillation called "hunting"—continuously overshooting the mark, and then coming back and overshooting again. Two of the cyberneticists spoke of this to Dr. Arturo Rosenblueth (formerly of the Harvard Medical School, now of the Institute Nacional de Cardiologia of Mexico) and asked him whether there is "any pathological condition in which the patient, in trying to perform some voluntary act like picking up a pencil, overshoots the mark, and goes into an uncontrollable oscillation? Dr. Rosenblueth immediately answered us that there is such a well-known condition, that it is called purpose tremor, and that it is often associated with injury to the cerebellum." Again: in designing a machine to enable the blind to read the printed page by ear, a severe problem was to get the machine to recognize letters of the same *shape* irrespective of *size* (the problem of *Gestalt* in psychology): a diagram of a proposed apparatus for this was shown to a neurophysiologist, and he immediately asked, "Is this a diagram of the fourth layer of the visual cortex of the brain?"

*

PROFESSOR WIENER is cautious and guarded in comparing the "pathology" of the machine with psychopathology, but he points out certain similarities which are amusing. When a computing machine goes wrong, possible treatments include (1) shaking it, (2) sending a large electric current through it, and (3) as a drastic measure, removing part of it. What with shock treatments and prefrontal lobotomy, all three of these methods have their counterparts in the psychiatric ward. A computing machine may go wrong when one of the "memories" that have been built into it (which are supposed to be self-effacing when no longer needed) goes wrong and repeats itself with irritating persistence. Professor Wiener compares this to "the capacity for maintained worry, known in the terminology of another profession as the *conscience*."

Professor Wiener has not shirked mathematical difficulties for his readers, and there are many pages in his book that the untrained reader will have to skip. This should by no means deter anyone from obtaining and reading the book, for the remaining pages, even though few, are packed with as much meat as is to be found in many a far heavier volume. The social implications of the new machines are briefly but excellently discussed. If the rest of the cyberneticists are like Professor Wiener, they are a long way from being irresponsible scientists, who give the world demons without regard to the good or evil results of their work.

The tremendous differences between men and machines Professor Wiener does not pretend to discuss, contenting himself in this book with pointing out these extraordinarily suggestive resemblances between machines and the human brain and nervous system. The reader who can distinguish between the brain and the mind will be able to see the differences clearly. The human brain may be, among other things, a calculating machine. The human mind actually calculates, no doubt using the brain. These elaborate machines do not calculate at all. They simply carry out mechanical (or electronic) operations, according to their nature. No numbers ever enter into the machine, as they enter the human mind. All that enters the machine is punch-cards with holes in them (or magnetized wires, or other devices), which are symbols for numbers to those who feed the machine, but not to the machine. All that leaves the machine is punch-cards (or the like) again, on which the holes are read by human beings as symbols for numbers. Nothing has

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ever entered the machine's mind, for the machine has no mind.

A machine, when "instructed" to carry out a certain computation, will carry out that computation, except in the case of mechanical "failure." A man, if instructed to carry out a computation, *may* carry it out. But men are abominably unpredictable scientific material. The man may, even if sound in mind and body, refuse to carry out the computation, for laziness or for any other good reason. And that is one immense superiority of man over the machine.

Hammer and Sickle Over Asia

MAX FISCHER

WESTERN influence in China is at a low point. Chinese Communists are advancing south, while the great powers of the West are on the run. While we are enjoying the success of our air bridge to Berlin, we are losing rapidly in prestige in the Far East and British and American economic investments are seriously endangered. Our victory over Japan failed to re-open the doors of Asia for good; Soviet imperialism is a more monstrous danger than Japanese expansion ever was.

This situation is well suited to open the eyes of the American public to the illusions and blunders of our Asiatic policy. A study of Russian expansion in Asia is a great help to such understanding. David J. Dallin's book, *The Rise of Russia in Asia* (*New Haven, Yale University Press,* $5.00), comes just in time.

Last year the author related the history of Soviet expansion in Asia from September 1931 down to the present, in a book entitled *Soviet Russia and the Far East.* This is one time when the second volume of a work was completed before the first. For the present book is volume I, though published under a title of its own. It deals with Russia's Asiatic policies from the middle of the 19th century until 1931.

Mr. Dallin was a Russian revolutionary who emigrated in 1921 and came to this country in 1940. He is one of the best informed writers on Soviet affairs and is able to use informative Russian source material unused until now by Western historians. This thorough and sound work is no piece of propaganda but a very precise account of a neglected chapter of history. Because it deals with a settled period, it could be written from a greater distance and in a more objective manner than the second volume dealing with the most recent developments.

Through his sober way of presenting the facts, Mr. Dallin gives a very clear picture of modern power politics in the wide spaces of Asia. He stresses the fact that Russia, India, China and Japan, the four countries embracing over a billion people (half of the world's popu-

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lation), are at the extremities of the Asiatic Continent, while the enormous spaces in Central Asia constitute a *power vacuum,* inviting expansion.

*

DALLIN'S book abounds in little-known information. It is interesting to learn that Alexander Herzen, the great spokesman of Russian liberalism, wrote in 1858 that the historical rôle of the Mediterranean would be taken over by the Pacific and that the Russians and Americans would divide between themselves the influence over this ocean of the future. Dallin points to a multitude of analogies and similarities between the Tsarist *Drang nach dem Osten*—especially from 1896 to 1904—and the recent Soviet drive.

This book depicts the Asiatic situation in its terrible consequences, without the wishful, comforting illusions of many American authors. His presentation of Chinese Communism, based on rich source material, makes it evident how foolish it was to claim that the Chinese Communists were only harmless "land reformers," or to expect them today to mitigate our defeat in China by a policy à la Tito.

Dallin's book illuminates the prehistory of Russian efforts for domination of Mongolia and Manchuria. Light is also shed on recent events. There is, for instance, the very interesting biography of Li Li-San, the Chinese Communist leader who, after having disappeared for fifteen years, suddenly reemerged in the Red Army's advance against the Japanese and is coming more and more to the fore recently. He was a radical Chinese Communist, a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, who in 1930 fought against the Stalin line for more revolutionary tactics. He was debunked by Moscow politicos as a "half-Trotskyite," and finally removed from the Central Committee and brought to Russia. His long education was successful. He seems to be transformed now into an obedient puppet to Stalin.

Such personal portraits, as well as the integration of Russian events into the background of the whole Asiatic history, make Dallin's book not only a useful source of information but a brilliant and most fascinating story.

Books

The Epic of American Industry. James Blaine Walker. Harper. $5.00.

The Economic Mind in American Civilization, 1865-1918. *Joseph Dorfman. Viking.* $6.00.

IF YOU are quite sure that you cannot stomach economic history, please do not make up your mind once and for all until you have read at least one chapter of James Blaine Walker's account of the development of American business and manufacturing. Take any one of the forty-nine chapters; if you will read one you will quite surely read most of the others. After all, making a living is fairly important for most people and quite interesting in at least some cases.

Using this as a premise, the author tells how people have made their livings in America from the colonial

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period down to the present time. The style is not stiffly academic. Mr. Walker writes from an experience gained in business; he uses homely examples and catchy phrases to illustrate his ideas. His book proves that it is not necessary to be dull in order to be informational.

Concerning the causes of the American Revolution, for example, he writes: "Attempts to appraise the relative importance of the causes of the American Revolution have provoked almost as much conflict as did the rebellion itself. Fortunately, historians do not go armed." Again, in commenting upon the demand by England that the colonial shippers observe the requirements of the Navigation Acts, he writes: "In their rugged individualism, New England merchants did not stampede to this sacrifice. They decided graciously to overlook this most unfortunate blunder of the Lords of Trade and set about circumventing the law." There is much more similar to this, but flippancy is not resorted to as a mask for insufficiency of knowledge. The Confederation period is adequately treated, with the emphasis naturally upon economic issues; the position that Marshall took with reference to the Constitution is made clear with a minimum of words; there is an excellent account of the construction of the Erie Canal and of its effect upon business.

The question as to whether slavery was an asset or a liability to the South is discussed without rancor, as is also the relation of Jackson to the Bank of the United States and to the Panic of 1837. The chapter on Jay Cooke makes clear that financing of wars has not changed much since the 1860's. In the later chapters excellent material is given on Ford, on the Dodge brothers, and on the automobile business in general. Not a reactionary in any sense, the author questions very seriously the possibility of business expansion in the future, now that government takes about one-fourth of the national income. The author ends upon an optimistic note, however, and believes that the American people will not drift into the morass of socialism, which promises so much and which gives so little.

★

The volume by Joseph Dorfman is the third in the series. Students of economics have already warmly praised the two earlier volumes, and there is no doubt but that the same enthusiasm will be shown for this latest one, which deals with the period from 1865 to 1918.

Mr. Dorfman believes that economic thought is an integral factor in the development of American culture. Professional and non-professional economists are studied; the contribution that each made is very thoughtfully analyzed. There is much more of the biographical and of the analytical in this volume than in the one by Walker, where the stress is placed upon the development of industry as such.

Dorfman is more concerned with the devolpment of economic ideas than with business as such, and some may find the book less interesting than the one by Walker. Exceptionally fine analyses seem to be accorded to the contributions of W. G. Sumner, Henry C. Adams, F. W. Taussig, Woodrow Wilson, and Thorstein Veblen. It seems likely that Dorfman's book will become a classic in its field. It is to be hoped that the additional volumes contemplated will be written, so that we may have a complete presentation and analysis of economic thought in America.

PAUL KINIERY.

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Jean Barois. Roger Martin du Gard. Viking. $3.50.

IN THE COURSE of commenting on T. S. Eliot's borrowing from that sly storehouse of vision called "Mother Goose," an English critic says: "Perhaps one of the reasons for the enduringness of these 'childhood' rhymes is that Mother Goose seldom uses adjectives; she works only with the simple nouns and the even simpler verbs of life." The remark is relevant here. Roger Martin du Gard—1937 winner of the Nobel Prize for his long work, *The World of the Thibaults*—spends little time describing his people: casting his story in a form very nearly like that of a play (a character's name is given, a brief phrase indicates his mood, his words follow), du Gard keeps close to life seen and life happening, things discovered and things taking place.

Jean Barois is a French intellectual who breaks with the Catholic Church of his ancestors (and of his young wife), leaves his family, becomes a celebrated freethinker, professor, and editor in the Paris of the closing years of the last century, fights valiantly on the side of the accused in the famous Dreyfus case, calls on the Virgin Mary when a traffic accident threatens his life, and finally, "sick and tired of the unavailing struggle to make some sense of life," returns to the Church. Round about him move many richly fascinating figures of *fin de siecle* France; the finest of them, Senator Marc-Elie Luce, a Socrates come back to life, is Progress's Pilgrim in a world undecided about the one, and suspicious of the other. (For that matter there is something of the pilgrim about many of the men and women in this book; they move from problem through answer to puzzle; I feel that whereas fifty years ago the question for most of them was "Does God exist?," today it would be "What do you mean by the word God?")

In its austerely thrilling beauty of movement this novel suggests the controlled flow of great painting. One of the most disturbing (and rewarding) pictures of this century, Paul Klee's "Grey Man and the Coast," might almost be a drawing of Jean Barois and his plight; the sharp, profoundly challenging *dailyness* of the coast of life absorbs man's attention in Klee's work just as it does in du Gard's. And in neither is the answer shirked.

"The simple nouns and the even simpler verbs" of existence give it bite and glow and life. And though hundreds of passages are so vividly trenchant as to cry for quotation, one—a warning of a trap more dangerously inviting today, perhaps, than ever before—must be set down at length: "Oh, I know we're always talking about our duty to the cause of human happiness. Yes, it's easy to take an interest in humanity at large, in mankind in the mass, in people whose sufferings will never come under our eyes. . . . But that's nothing, *nothing!* The love one feels for one's real *literal* neighbor, for those whose sufferings are visible at our door—that's love indeed, the only love that matters."

Roger Martin du Gard's story will have only passing value for most of us—unless, finishing it, we look a little differently on the man in the apartment adjoining ours, the family in the house next door, the people we shall work with tomorrow morning and afternoon. The test, as always, is in the testing. MURRAY HICKEY LEY.

This Was America. Oscar Handlin. Harvard. $6.

THE SUBTITLE of this book reads: "True accounts of people and places, manners and customs, as recorded by European travelers to the western shore in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries." Most of these writers about America have been travelers and visitors; hence, what their impressions lack in thoroughness they make up in spontaneity and freshness.

This is a historical anthology of aspects of American life forever developing, forever changing, whether in economic, social, moral or pictorial affairs, and to review it adequately would require long space. To catalogue its contents would be equally unsatisfactory. But there is one aspect which recurs more frequently than any other—almost every writer has touched on it; and that is the subject of the American woman. Why this should be, it is difficult to understand, unless it is because the writers see in her a new type of woman, a fact which, as it happens, is in itself a symptom of a civilization with new features, of which woman is one.

It cannot be said that, in giving their first impressions of the American woman, the writers—it will be noted that none of them is English—are particularly gallant, and, in some instances, they seem so startled by the native feminine apparition as to be almost rude. To be sure, these things were not said to the women they met; they are afterthoughts set down for the benefit of their own countrymen and, so to speak, in the form of a backhanded compliment to their own women, so different from those they encountered here. Again, such criticisms may be of value, too, for inevitably they reflect on the men who, we are told, liked their women that way.

The American woman's early passion for shopping, which continues to this day, is something that several of

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the writers note. "The women spend their days shopping; that is their favorite occupation," notes de Montlezun, a Frenchman, around 1816. Describing a Mrs. G., Henry Herz, a Viennese, asserts in 1866 that every day she invariably went out, either in a carriage or on foot, for two to five hours, touring the stores: "Generally without any intention of making a purchase, she has a score of bolts of cloth pulled down, looks through box after box of ribbons and tries on a dozen shawls. This manner of passing time, to the despair of the salespeople, is usual among American women who have given it a special name, 'shopping.'"

At the same time, the writers labor the point that American women have special powers by permission of the men. "Women," says Frederika Bremer, "in general, have all the power they wish. Woman is the center and the lawgiver, and the American man loves it so. He likes his wife to have her own will at home, and he loves to obey it." F. and T. Pulszky, Hungarian husband and wife, reported in 1853, that "it is a common boast with American gentlemen that their ladies rule, and are more respected than anywhere else in the world." I. J. Benjamin, from Rumania, does not mince words. Two idols, he says, are worshipped by America. "First is that deaf, dumb, blind Mammon. . . . The second, on the contrary, sees, hears, walks and talks and is above all full of life; it is the female sex. Both idols live together in constant warfare. What one builds, the other tears down; what one accumulates, the other scatters; what one makes good, the other spoils. The reign of women here is complete." The Baron von Hübner, an Austrian career diplomat, thought in 1871 that the fashion to disparage American women as "frivolous, flirtatious, extravagant . . . always running after pleasure" seemed to him unjust. His defence, however, is just a little lame. Thus, speaking of married women: "If they are too fond of dress, it is generally their husbands who wish it. If they are often seen abroad, it is because they have nothing to do at home."

"Marriages come easy in America; whether happiness comes in the same way is another question," says K. T. Griesinger, German historian, in 1858, who adds: "Meet your girl in the morning, marry in the afternoon, and by six in the evening you are settled in your home, man and wife." And later: "A tragic aspect stretches out before their long lives! Brawls for breakfast, scuffles at lunch, and blows for supper!" And then: "Why does man have feet, but to run?" The husband, to be sure, the author observes, rarely does so voluntarily because of his business or his job which he cannot change like a pair of gloves. "But the wife has the time and leisure, and generally also the will. She packs and leaves. . . ." Greisinger comments peppily: "Feel fortunate if you never hear from her again!" What he says of breach-of-promise cases and the like we leave to the reader's imagination.

Von Hübner, already quoted, has some salutary things to say of the American tendency to work for material ends. This excess toil seems to him "the source of serious evils. It produces exhaustion, lassitude, and premature old age; it deprives those who give themselves up to it first of time, and then of the power of enjoying the results of their labors. It makes money the principal object of life, excludes gaiety, entails a sadness which is the natural consequence of overfatigue, and destroys the family ties and home joys." JOHN COURNOS.

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Next Week

BRITISH SOCIALISM, by J. L. Benvenisti, appears just after nationalization of the strategic steel industry has been voted by the House of Commons. "The avowed purpose is, of course, to increase efficiency, but there is not a shred of evidence that [nationalizations] will do anything of the kind, and I am inclined to think that the Labor Party leaders . . . are perfectly well aware of this. The thing has never been, except in a very remote and problematical way, a question of efficiency. It has always been a question of power."

DID THEY KNOW IT WAS LOADED? by James Rorty, author of "Our Master's Voice: Advertising," concerns a recent series of questions on TVA and private utilities which comprise part of a market and opinion survey conducted by the Psychological Corporation, Inc. Mr. Rorty says "I care not who makes the laws of my country if I can write its questionnaires."

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Nutrition and the Soil. Dr. Lionel James Picton. Devin. $4.00.

IDEAS ABOUT DIET are legion, but the English author of this book is convincing on his two main points. He contends that the most nourishing plants for man and beast are those which are produced on soil richly fertilized by animal and vegetable wastes—"natural" as opposed to "artificial" fertilizers. And, second, that modern methods of milling flour and polishing rice destroy vitamins and minerals which are essential to human health and vigor. In other words only "wholemeal" bread (or brown rice) is worthy to be called the staff of life.

To establish these two main points Dr. Picton goes in for many a ramble. He cites scores of cases of patients, chance acquaintances and historic disasters and of experiments with rats, which bear out his contentions unmistakably. Yet he does so in a highly sketchy and casual fashion. He fails to supply sufficient data to satisfy an interested fellow-scientist. The results of his experiments are usually obvious enough to convince the average layman. Dr. Picton does not scruple to call to witness the great chef Escoffier on several occasions. Especially to commend a roast with salad and fruit as a most healthful combination.

It is impossible to consider a much-documented argument of this kind without realizing the price we are paying today for supplanting natural methods of cultivation, animal husbandry, the nourishing of infants and the preparation of food. The idea that you can put back essential elements lost by modern milling methods for instance, is beautifully exploded by the chapter on "The Folly of 'Reinforcing Flour.'" Dr. Picton's informal exposé manifests both geniality and good sense. E. S.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. G. and C. Merriam. $6.00.

THIS NEW desk-size dictionary, which has been four years in compiling, is based on the Second Edition of Webster's standard unabridged New International Dictionary. It includes more than 125,000 entries legibly printed on 1230 pages of thin paper. Most of the hundreds of new terms, brief definitions and illustrations naturally have to do with atomic energy, radio aerodynamics and other scientific developments. Its special geographical and biographical sections are remarkably complete. Extremely useful to have on hand for spelling, pronunciation, usage and general information.

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